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TIMELY FARM TOPICS No. 53b

FARM HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

A transcribed discussion between Edwin R. Henson, Director, Agricultural Rehabilitation Division, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration; and John Baker, Chief of the Radio Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Recorded February 6, 1946. Time: 7 minutes, 20 seconds, without announcer's parts

ANNOUNCER'S OPENING AND CLOSING

OPENING

ANNOUNCER (LIVE):

Here's a story of hands across the sea...farm hands across the sea. It's a story of what's going from farms in America to farms in wartorn countries across the ocean--to help the people who live there get back on their feet and start producing their own food once again. A man who knows this story first-hand is Edwin R. Henson, head of the agricultural division of UNRRA--the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. By transcription from Washington, let's listen to Mr. Henson telling this story to John Baker of the Department of Agriculture...here they are, Ed Henson and John Baker.

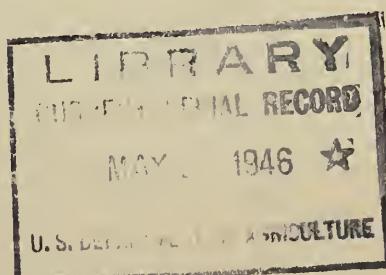
CLOSING

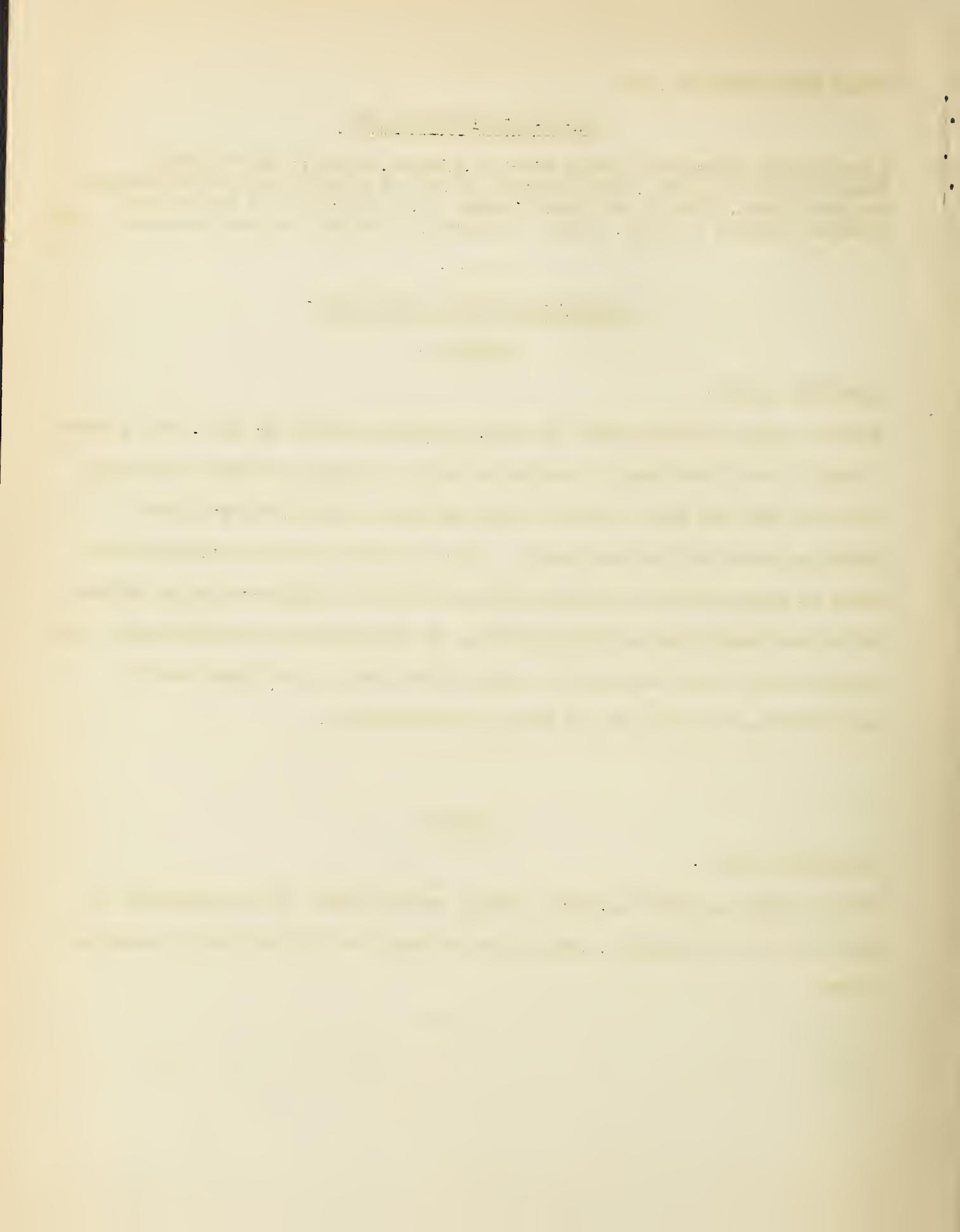
ANNOUNCER (LIVE):

Friends, that was Edwin R. Henson, UNRRA, and John Baker of the Department of Agriculture in Washington, reporting on the need for farm supplies in countries abroad.

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TRANSCRIPTION:

BAKER: Most of us know, Ed, that UNRRA is working in about a dozen European countries and China...and that part of UNRRA's job is to help farm people in those countries make a crop this year. What do those farmers need most to get started with their spring work, Ed?

HENSON: Work animals, John...something to pull the plow.

BAKER: All farmers are kin in that respect...whether they live in California or Czechoslovakia.

HENSON: That's right. The stories you've heard about entire farming villages in Europe where the Nazis didn't leave one single mule or horse are true.

BAKER: You've seen some of those villages yourself...

HENSON: Several of them. Now after the need for work animals, I'd say the next biggest need of European farmers is for dairy cows. They need fertilizer, seeds, tools, harness...and whatever farm machinery more fortunate countries can spare.

BAKER: How about insecticides?

HENSON: They need insecticides badly. Something else they need badly is fishing gear...though that's not exactly part of the farm picture.

BAKER: But definitely a part of the food picture, I'd say.

HENSON: Definitely...

BAKER: Now, Ed, you've itemized for us some of the essentials that farmers in war-stricken countries must have to get started producing again. Are they getting any of these things in time for spring work?

HENSON: Yes...not a whole lot compared with the need, but enough to make a start. We've sent over about 30,000 head of livestock so far.

BAKER: Probably a good many horses in those shipments...to pull plows.

HENSON: About 7,000 mares...with a few stallions to help start breeding their own stock again.

BAKER: What States supplied the horses?

HENSON: Middle-western States, mostly...

BAKER: Iowa...Kansas...Nebraska, maybe...

HENSON: Yes...and Tennessee and Illinois. And some from the Dakotas and Missouri.

BAKER: Missouri! Does that mean mules, too?

HENSON: The mules were already over there...went over with the Army.

BAKER: Oh, with the mountain troops that went to Italy?

HENSON: That's right. After the Italian campaign, the Army declared 15,000 mules surplus, and we shipped them right across the Adriatic to Greece and Yugoslavia in time for fall plowing. Many an acre of grain will be harvested in those countries this spring that never could have been planted last fall without those US Army mules.

BAKER: Now, Ed, what about dairy cows?

HENSON: We've sent over about 4,000 cows and heifers...and 160 bulls. That may not sound like so much to divide among several countries, but in Poland... say...where I've driven miles and miles through farm country without seeing a single cow, it's a start...and that's the big thing to the European farmer right now.

BAKER: What breeds did you send?

HENSON: The dairy breeds that the folks over there are familiar with. Right now they want something they can milk and ride and plow. We sent Brown Swiss to Greece and Yugoslavia and Albania. And Holsteins to Poland and Czechoslovakia. I think some Holsteins went to Yugoslavia too.

BAKER: Who looks after this stock...who's responsible for distributing it and taking good care of it?

HENSON: UNRRA and the Government of the country where the stock goes. The supervision is pretty strict. We help the local people set up their projects for work...and for breeding and disease control, and we follow through to see that things go reasonably right. We send them serums and other veterinary supplies and check on their use.

BAKER: Something like our own supervision under programs of the Bureau of Animal Industry here in the United States?

HENSON: Something of the sort. You see, most of the European countries had such services before the war, but the systems broke down completely because so many professional people were killed in the war or died in slave labor. The Chief Veterinarian of Poland today is a man over 80 years old. He said he hid in a small village...and he was so old the Nazis let him alone. Now he's back serving his country...one of the few professional men in Poland who lived to do it.

BAKER: With men of spirit like that, Poland will be back in the running soon, I'm sure. Ed, I was talking with Dr. Roy Magruder, a seed specialist of the Department of Agriculture...

HENSON: We work with Roy Magruder and other men in the Department of Agriculture.

BAKER: He told me UNRRA has sent a lot of valuable supplies of seed to European countries that don't have enough seed.

HENSON: We have...thousands and thousands of tons of seed.

BAKER: Roy said the seed were carefully selected to do well in the soils and climates where they'd be planted. The planting instructions on the packets were translated into the language of the country where they were going...

HENSON: That's right. Several Department of Agriculture scientists helped us out on the business of getting the right seeds to the right areas...with the best possible directions for their use.

BAKER: What kinds of seed did you send?

HENSON: Well...we sent a lot of bean seed for one thing...bean seed from Idaho and California...and some from Wyoming and Montana and Colorado. We sent a good many lima bean seed...we got the lima seed from California.

BAKER: They eat a lot of cabbage across the Atlantic...I'm sure you sent some cabbage seed.

HENSON: Lots of cabbage seed from Oregon and Washington. And carrot seed from California and Idaho...and cauliflower seed from California.

BAKER: Western stuff! Didn't the States east of the Mississippi supply any seed?

HENSON: We used a lot of Eastern tomato seed, from New Jersey and Maryland and Delaware. And we got eggplant and pepper seed from those States, too. The Russians asked us for some watermelon seed...

BAKER: I can guess where the watermelon seed came from...Georgia, suh!

HENSON: Georgia and Florida. The climate down there is pretty much like the climate in southern Russia...down in the Crimea...where the seed went.

BAKER: As far as bulk is concerned, I imagine most of your seed was probably cereal grains.

HENSON: That's especially true of wheat. We sent tons and tons of wheat seed from Montana and Nebraska...and Kansas and Oklahoma--to help bring back the wheat fields of Czechoslovakia. The barley and wheat seed we sent to Greece and Albania came from California and Arizona. And the oats from Texas.

BAKER: How about corn?

HENSON: Russia wanted seed corn...for part of their country the Germans over-ran. It had to be a variety that matured early...the growing season in that part of Russia is short. So we got seed corn from Minnesota and Idaho for the Russians.

BAKER: You mentioned China, Ed, as the major country outside of Europe where UNRRA is working...

HENSON: UNRRA is just beginning to work in China, John, and we probably won't be through with our part for at least a year or so. After that, the Chinese Government will still have a long way to go.

BAKER: UNRRA pulls out just as soon as the government of a country feels it can go it alone?

HENSON: That's the agreement. We expect to be out of most of the European countries before we're out of China, of course.

BAKER: Let's see if I know the names of the European countries where UNRRA is working. Poland, Czechoslovakia...Greece...

HENSON: Yugoslavia...Albania...Italy...Austria

BAKER: And the Ukraine in Russia?

HENSON: Yes, and also Byelorussia...another part of the country the Germans laid waste. Altogether, UNRRA is working in about 15 countries now.

BAKER: Ed, who decides what countries UNRRA will work in?

HENSON: The needy country asks UNRRA for help. If a committee of UNRRA finds that the country can't pay for its own relief supplies, then UNRRA goes in.

BAKER: Do I understand correctly that 90 percent of the money that any country puts up for UNRRA is spent in the country that puts up the money?

HENSON: That's the way it works.

BAKER: Then 90 percent of the money our Congress appropriates for our share of UNRRA is spent right here at home?

HENSON: Right. We used a lot of it to buy the livestock and seed we've been talking about---and the things we won't have time to go into, insecticides, fertilizer, tools, and emergency machinery---which is the only kind of machinery we're sending.

BAKER: So that for the folks who like to be realistic, the program has advantages for folks with things to sell...as well as the folks who desperately need the goods.

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